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ABSTRACT

Guidelines for the development and implementation of a public school uniform policy are presented in this document. Written during spring 1991 in response to Virginia House Bill 1206, which directed the state board of education to develop model policy guidelines by January 1, 1992, the suggestions serve as a practical guide for planning, implementing, and evaluating a school uniform program. Methodology involved a literature review and a nationwide survey of seven school systems with public school uniform programs. Guidelines also address parental and community involvement, constitutional concerns of individual rights, and cost and procurement. A successful program involves parents and the community, is voluntary, and begins at the elementary school level. A summary of telephone interview responses and a list of resource personnel are included. (Contains 10 references.) (LMI)

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REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ON

Model Guidelines for the Wearing of Uniforms in Public Schools

TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 27

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
1992

EA024228

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Foreword

The Virginia Board of Education was directed by the 1991 Virginia General Assembly to develop model guidelines for the wearing of uniforms in public schools that the school board of the City of Portsmouth may use to establish requirements for pupils to wear uniforms. Specifically, this Act reads as follows:

1991 RECONVENED SESSION
VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY - CHAPTER 671

House Bill 1206
An Act relating to the wearing of uniforms in public schools.
Approved April 3, 1991

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. §1. Board of Education guidelines; authority of the school board of the City of Portsmouth to require pupils to wear uniforms.____A. By January 1, 1992, the Board of Education shall, in consultation with the office of the Attorney General, develop model guidelines for the school board of the City of Portsmouth to utilize when establishing requirements for pupils to wear uniforms. In developing these guidelines, the Board shall consider ways to promote parental and community involvement, relevant state and federal constitutional concerns such as freedom of religion and freedom of speech, as well as the ability of pupils to purchase such clothing.

B. Upon the approval by the Board of the model guidelines, the school board of the City of Portsmouth may establish requirements, consistent with the Board's guidelines, for the students enrolled in any of its schools to wear uniforms while in attendance at such school during the regular school day, provided that the school board of the City of Portsmouth shall not use state funds for the purchase of school uniforms.

The model guidelines, prepared by a Virginia Department of Education team, are meant to serve as a practical guide for planning, implementing, and evaluating a school uniform program. Approaches being used by other school uniform projects across the nation and a listing of resource personnel to contact for information and assistance are provided. The material in these model guidelines is recommended as good practice and should not be regarded as a mandate. All information, recommendations, and outlined procedures may be adapted as needed.

Suzanne F. Thomas, President
Virginia Board of Education

Acknowledgments

This publication is the result of collaborative effort by a Virginia Department of Education team, which studied the most promising practices in school uniform policy development and program implementation. The following multidisciplinary team members developed the guidelines contained in this document.

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*Advisory Support

We wish to thank personnel in the following school divisions, from across the nation, who answered our questions and generously shared their expertise:

Baltimore Public Schools, Maryland
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**New Orleans Public Schools, Louisiana
District of Columbia Public Schools, Washington, D.C.

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Editorial assistance for this report was provided by the Virginia Vocational Curriculum and Resource Center, administered by Henrico County Public Schools, Division of Vocational and Community Education, Peggy L. Watson, Director, and Phil R. Phelps, Writer/Editor.

Executive Summary

House Bill 1206

These model guidelines were written during the spring of 1991 in response to House Bill 1206 relating to the wearing of uniforms in public school. This bill directed the Virginia Board of Education to develop model guidelines, by January 1, 1992, for the school board of the City of Portsmouth to use in establishing school uniform policies and procedures.

Explanation

The impetus for establishing school uniform programs has developed from two main sources: the current educational reform movement and parents' concern over the cost of, and their children's preoccupation with, "designer" clothes and footwear. However, both sources concur that their common goal is to establish a school environment conducive to learning, by eliminating one pervasive, stigmatizing distraction.

An interdisciplinary team at the Department of Education initiated background research which included a thorough review of studies and articles from a variety of sources. A series of consultations with a nationally representative sample of schools presently operating school uniform programs was conducted, to find out the best practices and the possible pitfalls in implementing a school uniform program. The literature review produced remarkably little research in this area and no evaluations of the efficacy or short comings of a school uniform policy. Our survey of school systems with school uniform programs revealed that most were planning to publish data but evaluation results are not available yet.

In compliance with the bill, these guidelines address parental and community involvement, constitutional concerns of individual rights and freedom, cost and procurement, and other relevant issues pertaining to school uniform programs.

Recommendations

The Virginia Department of Education team discerned that the key elements in initiating a school uniform program were as follows:

- Parent and community organizations should be involved in all planning and decision making from the beginning of a school uniform program.

- The uniform program should begin in elementary schools.
- All policies and procedures should stress the voluntary nature of parental and student participation.
- The principal and faculty of each participating school should be committed to and enthusiastic about the school uniform program.

The smooth maintenance and continuity of a school uniform program are facilitated by:

- Active and enthusiastic parental participation in the management of the program,
- Simple procedures for reordering and rapid delivery of uniform items to accommodate transfer students and other contingencies and,
- Evaluation by the school administration in the areas of self-esteem, behavior/discipline, and achievement.

As the school uniform program becomes an established and integral part of the educational environment, students' continued participation in the program is fostered by the encouragement and support of school administrators, teachers, peers and parents.

With the appropriate support from school administrators and the active participation of parents, guidelines such as those that follow, offer practical suggestions to any school interested in establishing a school uniform program.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

1. BACKGROUND

An Educational Research Information Clearinghouse (ERIC) search of the literature revealed that little information is available regarding the implementation and effects of uniform programs in public schools. No studies have been found that link the wearing of uniforms to outcomes such as student achievement and discipline. This amount of research and information is necessarily limited because relatively few public school systems have implemented such policies.

Reasons for Implementing School Uniform Policies

The few public schools that have implemented school uniform policies have done so in the belief that there will be a variety of benefits for students. Some of the reasons given are the increase in the students' sense of membership in the school community, improvement in students' self-image, a reduction in the differences between the "haves" and the "have nots," improved focus on school work, a reduction in crime, improved discipline, and reduced costs for the family.

Crime and Discipline

Newspaper accounts of students being assaulted and their clothes being stolen have resulted in the adoption of school uniform policies by some public school systems. In other newspaper articles, school administrators' difficulties in dealing with "gang" and satanic cult identification with specific colors and articles of clothing have been reported.

An attempt to reduce discipline problems is often mentioned as a major reason for implementing uniform policies. In an article from a professional journal, one principal noted, "I've had fewer difficulties (since the uniforms). When the students are in the school yard, they're dressed up, and few kids run around. And we've had fewer discipline problems. I think it's because of the uniforms. They just don't want to get dirty" (*American School Board Journal, June, 1990, p. 28.)* Likewise, in a study conducted by Orleans Parish School Board, (New Orleans, Louisiana), 45% of survey respondents believed that discipline had improved as a result of a school uniform policy.

Cost Factors

The economic benefit of school uniforms has been one of the major reasons given by school divisions that have implemented uniform policies. For parents

with a number of children in school, the savings realized by buying the uniforms as compared to the cost of "regular" clothes can be considerable. Typically, school uniforms have been simple in style and color to make them economical and may not be of the type that must be purchased from a uniform company. For example, navy blue trousers and skirts, white shirts and blouses, and black shoes provide an economical "uniform."

Different Effects of Uniforms

Schools choosing to develop a school uniform program should consider the different effects of such a program on both boys and girls, different cultural or religious groups, and the developmental stage of the students. Vener and Hoffer (1965) noted that girls demonstrate greater clothing awareness than boys, and that girls who participate in extracurricular activities are more extroverted and more likely to be clothing conscious. Though no educational research reports were found regarding the significance of clothing among various ethnic and cultural groups, and even though there are no guiding principles as to how a school uniform policy should address student differences, it is reasonable to expect that the policy will be sensitive to the unique needs of various sub-populations of the school system.

When a school system considers the different effects of a school uniform policy on students, it must address cultural and religious factors as well as developmental stages of the various age groups. Elementary school age students may find the wearing of uniforms a positive experience that improves their self-image and increases their sense of identity with the school community. Adolescents, however, are involved in a very different set of developmental tasks. These tasks include trying on different roles, working out relationships with authority figures, undergoing physiological changes, and "hanging out" in various subgroups where youth gain group and personal identity through clothing and other adornment. Attempts to standardize dress at the high school level may result in authority conflicts with school administrators and result in additional discipline problems.

Clothing and School Organization

Through a descriptive case example, Johnson (1977) explained the characteristic manner in which similarities and differences in student clothing and appearance are associated with cross-color as well as differential same-color groupings within and between classrooms in a "desegregated" public school. He noted,

> (There is) a high correlation between mode of dress, socioeconomic condition, and academic standing and status. Similarities and differences in clothing and appearance paralleled patterns of formal academic grouping as well as informal student interaction. Specifically,

> these patterns correspond with the color and class alignments in the community; generally they correspond to the color and class alignments in the national society (Cox, 1948; Landes, 1953). It seems as if we are to believe that academic ability and class standing invariably are a reflex of clothing and appearance (p. 2).

Johnson concluded by noting that uniform dress would eliminate some of the inequality in public school education. Students who dress "poorly" may be perceived as being less able to perform the student role and consequently respond to the teachers' expectations. In a similar vein, Eicher and Kelley (1974), in *A Longitudinal Study of High School Girls' Friendship Patterns, Social Class, and Clothing*, noted that "girls who did not 'dress right' were described as those who came from poor families, did not care how they looked, or had poor grades and attitude." These students may be "tracked" into lower level classes at an early age. Implementation of a school uniform policy could ameliorate some of the detrimental consequences of "tracking" and teacher expectations for learning.

2. DEVELOPING SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Resource personnel (see p. 17) contacted by the Virginia Department of Education team consistently mentioned certain key elements as essential to the implementation of a school uniform policy. These key elements were as follows:

- **Parents and parent and community organizations should be involved in all planning and decision making from the beginning of the school uniform program.**
- **The uniform program should begin in elementary schools.**
- **All policies and procedures should stress the voluntary nature of parental and student participation.**
- **The principal and faculty of each participating school should be committed to and enthusiastic about the school uniform program.**

Other important factors that emerged from the survey, the literature, and the study of constitutional issues included the following:

- Planning for and information sharing about the school uniform project should be started about a year before implementation.
- A school uniform committee, having one or more persons designated as contacts, should be formed, perhaps as a subcommittee of the PTA.
- Surveys should be conducted with students, parents, school staff, and other appropriate people.
- A date should be established for implementation of the voluntary school uniform program.
- Local news media support should be enlisted to provide accurate accounts of the plans for implementation.
- Ample opportunity should be provided for individual interviews and group meetings so that parents and students can obtain factual information, express their opinions, and make suggestions.

- Individual schools within a school division should make an autonomous decision regarding participation in the school uniform program.

- The individual schools should choose the uniform (items of clothing, shoes, etc.) to be worn by students.

- State and local procurement procedures and restrictions should be determined.

- All state and local procurement procedures must be followed meticulously.

- Procedures should be established whereby all students can obtain the clothing that constitutes the school uniform, regardless of family income level.

- Financial arrangements should be made available to families who cannot afford the uniform, e.g., grants from the uniform company chosen, local community organizations, PTA fund raising, etc.

- Opportunities in group meetings or on an individual basis should be organized for dissenting parents so that they may express their reservations more fully, be provided with factual information, and enter into more in-depth discussion on the topic. Parents from a successful school uniform program might be invited to attend these meetings.

- A student contest to create a logo, badge, or crest for the school could be organized.

- Essay and art awards could be organized for students' stories and illustrations about the benefits and limitations of school uniforms.

- A trial run "uniform day" could be organized, when the students are requested to wear similar clothing, e.g., boys wear black shoes, blue pants, white shirt, any tie; girls wear black shoes, blue skirt, white blouse, and a red hair ribbon.

- The classrooms, halls, and playground could be videotaped at specific times and locations on the "uniform day" and the day before. This videotape could be illuminating for parents, students, and faculty. The students and faculty could be encouraged to write a short paragraph on what differences they observe in appearance, behavior, and attitude from one day to the other.

- It should be stressed frequently, verbally and in writing, that all children will be welcome and expected to attend school after the implementation date whether they wear the school's uniform or not .

- Evaluation in the areas of self-esteem, discipline, and achievement should be planned.

Several elementary schools whose students will attend the same middle school could be pilot sites for the school uniform program. If students become accustomed to wearing school uniforms in earlier grades, the policy is then likely to be accepted with less resistance from the students in pre- and early adolescence. A similar arrangement could be considered for several middle schools that send students to one high school.

The personnel consulted by team members indicated varied lengths of time that they had had a school uniform policy (2-4 years). Some noted a decline in participation as the students grew older. Several sites reported that the PTA organized the procedures for the purchasing of the school uniform and that grants were obtained from individual uniform companies, community civic organizations, and PTA fund-raising activities to assist low income families to purchase the school uniform. All sources indicated that a family's lack of funds to purchase the uniform was not a barrier once the school concerned had decided "where there's a will, there's a way."

3. PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The involvement of parents and the school community in the development and implementation of a school uniform program for a school is essential and must be extensive. The parents and the community must be committed to the belief that the wearing of school uniforms can have a positive effect on the students' self-esteem, achievement, behavior, school spirit, and identification.

Ideally, discussion and planning among all concerned parties -- students, parents, school faculty and administrators, and community participants -- should continue throughout the year prior to the implementation date. Many of the school uniform programs surveyed for these guidelines indicated that the parents had provided the initial impetus to start the program and had most of the responsibility for organizing, implementing, and maintaining it.

In cooperation with the school's administration, parent organizations and community members can be meaningfully involved in the school uniform planning process by. . .

- Establishing a parent uniform committee in the target school, with contact people designated and telephone numbers given.

- Preparing and distributing informational and awareness fliers to inform parents about purchasing details, schedules for ordering and delivery, "fitting dates", and clearly delineated costs.

- Collecting newspaper articles on the issue and summarizing contents for informational purposes.

- Cooperating in the development of a parental survey instrument and assisting in compiling responses.

- Generating positive publicity through the news media by issuing press releases, organizing television and newspaper interviews, and presenting panel discussions.

- Holding meetings where factual information is provided about the following:

    1) successful programs already in operation, e.g., videotape/slide presentations of a "uniformed" school in action, interviews with satisfied parents.

    2) cost and availability of uniforms, e.g., representatives from uniform companies can present package options, and samples of the uniforms can be modeled by children.

- Assisting in writing local policies and procedures for implementation of a voluntary school uniform project.
- Determining items of clothing and footwear to be included in the school uniform.
- Making arrangements for the Virginia Board of Education Model Guidelines and local policies and procedures to be available in school libraries and public libraries in the community.
- Reviewing local policy and procedures on school uniforms at parent and community meetings.
- Providing a uniform "hot-line" for parents to call when they have questions.
- Ordering, receiving, and distributing the school uniforms in accordance with state and local procurement procedures.
- Scheduling the reordering articles of clothing as needed, e.g., to accommodate transfer students.
- Organizing a consignment or exchange store for uniform items that students have outgrown.
- Providing enthusiastic encouragement and support to the students and faculty after the initial excitement of implementation day wears off.

4. EVALUATION OF A SCHOOL UNIFORM PROGRAM

Evaluation of the implementation of a school uniform policy is necessary to determine if the policy is achieving the intended outcomes. It is recommended that the evaluation of the policy be guided by the rationale and purpose for implementing the policy, e.g., to lessen discipline problems, reduce the cost of clothing for parents, and increase student attentiveness to educational tasks. The evaluation questions should be developed in collaboration with students, administrators, faculty, and parents.

A collection of data regarding perceptions of the implications for and consequences of implementation should be made and reviewed at least annually. Depending upon local school division resources, additional evaluation methods can be developed to provide more in-depth and useful information about the implications for and outcomes of a school uniform policy.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICIES AND PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

When considering the implementation of a school uniform policy, school boards should be aware that there are sensitive issues regarding such a policy. Because of the numerous legal issues associated with implementing a school uniform policy, any school board considering such a policy should first seek the counsel of its attorney and consult with the attorney at every stage of development.

Although no clear legal concensus exists regarding school uniforms or dress codes, a number of lower court rulings on dress codes are based in two landmark Supreme Court decisions -- In Re Gault 387 U.S. 1 (1967) and Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District, 393 U.S. 503 (1969). Gault confirmed that minors do have constitutional rights, while Tinker found that the right of free expression extends to "silent passive witness," in this case, the wearing of black armbands by students in protest against the Vietnam conflict.

A useful resource when reviewing cases around the country on uniforms and dress codes is an annotation entitled: "Validity of Regulation by Public School Authorities As to Clothes or Personal Appearance of Pupils," 14 A.L.R. 3d 1201. The annotation cites the following Fourth Circuit cases involving student hair length:

- Massie v. Henry, 455 F. 2d 779 (4th Cir. 1972)
- Long v. Zopp, 476 F. 2d 180 (4th Cir. 1973)
- Mick v. Sullivan, 4767 F. 2d 973 (4th Cir. 1973)

In addition to these cases, Crosby v. Holsinger, 852 F.2d 801 (4th Cir. 1988) concerns the prohibition by schools of the wearing of offensive symbols by students. Also, 1971-1972 Attorney General's Annual Report 344 and 1969-1970 Attorney General's Annual Report 227 provide opinions on school boards' authority to establish dress codes and their authority to regulate student hair length, respectively.

When the rules relating to student dress have been challenged legally, it has usually been on grounds that they restrict individual liberties, specifically first amendment rights of freedom of expression. Therefore, a school uniform policy should be carefully written and designed to recognize the basic principles of individual freedom. One way to accomplish this is to make the policy voluntary rather than mandatory. At present, some schools in Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Connecticut, New York, and Illinois are either using or piloting student uniforms on a voluntary basis. Detroit has a mandatory policy, and Louisiana has introduced a mandatory school uniform policy this year.

Because students with disabilities come under special provisions of the law in matters of suspension or expulsion, a voluntary uniform policy might also reduce the likelihood of legal challenges from these students. It is possible that such a child

could not be suspended for longer than 10 consecutive days as a disciplinary procedure under a mandatory uniform policy if the child's refusal to wear a uniform were related to his or her disability, or the suspension represented a change in placement. It is also possible that a mandatory policy might have other least restrictive environment (LRE) implications under P.L. 94-142. Further, a mandatory policy must allow reasonable accommodation for students who are disabled if they are not able to wear the prescribed uniform. (For example, allergic reaction to uniform fabric. See §504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act.)

The *Standards of Quality* (§22.1-253.13:1 et seq. of the *Code of Virginia*) must be observed when school boards implement new policies. Standard 6 states that "...public involvement is a fundamental component of meaningful planning for public schools," and requires that divisionwide improvement plans be developed with community involvement.

According to Richard K. Sparks, professor of educational administration at California State University, Fresno, school officials can regulate student expression only when students create "...a material and substantive disruption of the orderly process of a school." An example of such a disruption resulting from student dress might be a student who comes to school wearing only a bathing suit.

Sparks goes on to point out that courts limit school boards' authority to "...the creation of regulations that clearly can be related to the function of education." Therefore, any school wishing to adopt a uniform policy must be able to demonstrate that uniforms are "...an integral part of the total school program and help achieve the schools' legitimate goals...." This observation has been echoed by Ivan Gluckman, legal counsel for the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), who states that "any restrictions on student dress must have a legitimate educational rationale." Gluckman further states that "the burden is on the school district to establish some rationale that the dress code is not an arbitrary or capricious requirement."

School boards should also be aware that if such a uniform policy is adopted, schools may have to serve as the purchasing agent when uniforms are procured. If this is the case, all purchases must be made in accordance with federal law, the Virginia Public Procurement Act (*Code of Virginia* § 11-35 et seq.), local school board policy, and administrative regulations.

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF TELEPHONE INTERVIEW RESPONSES

The responses to these questions reflect the comments received by team members in their telephone interviews with personnel in school systems (see p. 17) in which school uniform policies had been developed and implemented.

1. How long has your school district had a uniform policy?

   One school in Baltimore, reported three years while another school in Baltimore indicated four years. New Haven, school system reported three years and for New Orleans, two years.

2. What was the rationale for developing and implementing a uniform policy in your school district?

   Respondents provided similar reasons for developing and implementing a uniform policy. Parent groups expressed a critical need for and were supportive of uniform policies. Those interviewed felt that a uniform policy would reduce fights among students about clothing; reduce distractions; foster school pride and identity; reduce competitiveness among students for "brand name" clothing; and be cost effective for parents.

3. Who took the lead role in the development and implementation of the uniform policy?

   Chicago Public Schools reported that the policy grew out of the "school reform movement." The president of the board of education and a board member in New Orleans recognized the need for such a policy. Parent groups, however, were the major force for uniform policies in the other school systems interviewed. In New Haven, where the parents vote whether or not to have a uniform policy, 90% of the parents must be in favor before a policy can be implemented.

4. What groups (parents, students, teachers, community) were involved in the process of developing and implementing the policy?

   All respondents indicated that all these groups were involved in both processes.

5. Is the uniform policy in your school district mandatory or voluntary?

Detroit Public Schools reported that its policy is mandatory at all grade levels. New Orleans officials stated that the policy began as voluntary, then became mandatory at all grade levels. Other respondents indicated that their policies were voluntary.

6. What are the intended outcomes of implementing a school uniform policy in your school district?

Respondents expressed similar reactions: development of student pride and spirit; fewer costs for parents; less competition among students for "designer" clothes; improved student discipline; avoidance of groupings by students, enhanced student identification with the school; development of student feelings of belonging.

7. Has the policy had the intended outcome in your school district?

All except one respondent indicated a definite yes. Detroit Public Schools stated that "it was too early to tell because the schools have begun enforcement of the policy at different times." The other respondents said that the children seemed happier; looked better; the majority of parents came to support the policy; peer pressure diminished; parents saved money; and there seemed to be less "social class friction."

8. Have there been unintended outcomes of implementing the uniform policy in your school district?

All school districts reported "unintended" outcomes. Parents learned that costs were not an inhibiting factor. Students gained a sense of pride, and a "closeness" between the schools and parents developed -- a feeling of "we're all in this together." There seemed to be a rise in student self-esteem and a pride in the uniforms.

9. What does your uniform consist of?

What the uniform "looks like" is a decision made by the schools themselves. Most of the school districts require solid colors for the clothing. Shirts, ties, trousers, and sweaters make up the boys' uniform while the girls wear blouses, jumpers, or skirts. One of the schools reported that the name of the school is on the shirts and blouses.

10. Do you have other aspects of a school dress code, e.g., length of hair, jewelry, make-up, etc.?

"Yes, nothing flashy nor unusual" reported the New Orleans school system. In Chicago, the dress code is decided by the schools. Detroit indicated that there was a dress code mandated throughout the school system. The remaining respondents said no to this question.

11. What do you do if parents are unable to purchase uniforms?

Responses to this question varied considerably. A few respondents said that principals try to find some money. Others said that schools have parent fund raisers; those who need to go to discount stores to purchase the clothing; parent-teacher associations assist; and businesses make contributions. Costs of uniforms varied from $25/$30 in Baltimore to $80/$100 in New Haven.

12. Who is responsible for purchasing the uniforms in your school district?

Parents purchase the uniforms. In one Baltimore school, there is a form for parents to use to order the uniform through the school. Parents with children in this school also have the option of purchasing the uniforms directly from a store.

13. Will you send us a copy of your district's uniform and procurement policy?

New Orleans sent a copy of its policy. The other respondents indicated that written policies did not exist.

14. Based on your experience implementing a uniform policy in your school district, what recommendations would you have for someone beginning to develop and implement a uniform policy?

Responses to this question were as follows: New Haven -- Ensure that parents can afford uniforms; that principals will be strong in urging parents to support the uniform policy; and begin implementation with the elementary school students. A Baltimore school responded: "Get parents involved early and fully," and "use lots of praise with students." Both Chicago and Detroit responded similarly: "You must have grass roots involvement in the development of the policy," and "plan for a voluntary and gradual implementation."

15. Were there barriers to implementing the uniform policy in your school district?

The responses from Detroit and Baltimore indicated there were no barriers to implementation. New Haven reported that about 10% of the parents complained initially, but meetings were held with them by school officials to deal with any concerns they may have had. Some Chicago parents did not want to change "the way it was," but after implementation, they began to realize that the policy "saved money in the long run." New Orleans stated that as the students grew older, they began to wear the uniforms "less and less."

16. If there were no barriers, why was the policy so readily accepted?

Two major reasons were given by the respondents to this question. 1) parents supported the policy and carried it out, and 2) the voluntary nature of implementation made the difference.

17. Do you know if there has been an increase, decrease, or no change in the number of discipline referrals in your school district since the uniform policy was implemented?

New Haven reported no change. All the other respondents believed that the number of discipline cases had been reduced since implementation of the policy. Specific comments in response to this question suggest positive changes: for example: "Daily observations of student behavior showed less need for discipline; poorer children have better attendance (not ashamed of their clothes); many children now have the attitude that they are 'coming to work, not play'; there seems to be less competition on the part of the students; and the students act more responsibly."

18. Do you know if there has been an increase, decrease, or no change in the achievement levels of your students since the uniform policy was implemented?

Although formal evaluation data were not available from any of the respondents, all believed that there had been increased achievement levels since the policy had been implemented. All agreed that with improved self-esteem, students' achievement levels will increase. New Orleans expects to have statistical evaluation data during 1991.

19. If there have been changes, do you perceive that the uniform policy contributed to the changes? How do you know?

Baltimore, New Haven, Chicago, and Detroit indicated there are observable improvements in student behavior and an increase in self-esteem.

20. If some schools in your district have a uniform policy and others do not, have there been consequences of this approach?

Because of the voluntary nature of the implementation of the uniform policies, i.e., each school decides, there seems to have been no negative consequences.

21. Has your school district evaluated the school uniform policy?

Because the policies are new, no school district has yet conducted an evaluation.

22. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the uniform policy in your school district?

Baltimore recommended a system of "rewards" for students and schools that are successful in implementing the policy. New Haven mentioned that "kids should not be excluded because of attitudes." No other responses were made to this question by the persons interviewed.

23. When the decision was made to implement a uniform policy, would it have been helpful to have had some guidelines to follow?

"Without a doubt, yes" was the typical response of most interviewed. Baltimore indicated that guidelines would not be needed if parents "work it out."

RESOURCE PERSONNEL

Team members telephoned the following personnel in seven school systems in which school uniform policies had been developed and implemented.

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